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RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 0202

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 DUSHANBE 000302

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN (HUSHEK)
INL/AAE (BUHLER)
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DEFENSE FOR OSD/P

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: SNAR KCRM PGOV AF TI

SUBJECT: TAJIKISTAN FINALLY TO TRAIN AFGHAN BORDER GUARDS

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¶1. Summary: After months of deliberation and several public and private pronouncements by President Rahmon, General Gafarov, Deputy Chairman of the Committee for National Security, told INL, EXBS and OSCE officers on March 2 that Tajikistan was prepared to go forward with joint training of Afghan and Tajik border guards but only at the U.S.-financed regional training center in Khorog. He also said Tajikistan welcomed the idea of training counter-drug agents of both countries there. End summary.

¶2. General Gafarov, Deputy Chairman of the Committee for National Security,, meeting at the MFA with INL, EXBS, and OSCE officers on March 2 said that the Government of Tajikistan was willing to go forward with joint training of Afghan and Tajik border guards but only in Khorog, the capital of the Gorno-Badakshan Autonomous Area of Tajikistan. This is the first concrete step by the Committee for National Security after several public and private pronouncements by President Rahmon stretching back over a year. The KNB General said the Tajiks were only prepared to invite limited numbers of Afghans with the exact numbers to be worked out with the Afghan government. He asserted that the border crossing points on the Afghan side were staffed with only 20 soldiers so more than five absent on training would be an unacceptable burden on operations. Gafarov said the focus should be on how to improve coordination and inspection skills to facilitate trade via bridges at Ishkashim, Khorog, and Darvaz border crossing points.

¶3. Emboffs pressed for inclusion of the Border Guard officers and soldiers of the Nizhniy Pyanj/Sher Khan Bandar port of entry but Gafarov pushed back, saying that the U.S.-built bridge was too far from the Khorog training facility and that Nizhniy Pyanj was a busy crossing point where joint training would disrupt the work of the post. Pressed again, he threw up his hands in (false?) exasperation and agreed to train at/near the bridge but only if donors built a regional training center there because there were no suitable facilities available. He firmly stated that Afghans were not going to be trained in Dushanbe.

¶4. We agreed to do the initial phase of training at the Khorog

Regional Training Center but reserved the option to train those in and near Nizhniy Pyanj in the following phase of the project, after identifying a training facility closer to the bridge. Previously Gafarov had told us that he was looking for a dormitory in Dushanbe where he could lock up the Afghan trainees at night otherwise they would "walk away and do business."

¶ 15. The Khorog Border Guard Training Center is an ongoing INL-funded project implemented by the International Organization for Migration which began in 2005. During the \$450,000 project IOM renovated an existing building on the border guard base in central Khorog to serve as a regional training facility. The training center has a dormitory for 24, laundry, dining room, and a small gym and library providing a self-contained location for students from the Gorno-Badakshan area of eastern Tajikistan. By the end of 2008, in addition to renovating the structure, IOM and the Border Guards had trained 210 employees of border check-points. For 2009, IOM plans to teach 24 students each into four three month-long courses. The instructors teach conscripts and warrant officers (praporshchiki) checkpoint operations, fraudulent document detection, migration legislation, English and Persian languages, and computer skills.

¶ 16. INL Dushanbe anticipates no logistical problems co-locating the Afghans at the training center. The next steps are for the Government of Tajikistan to contact counterparts in the Afghan government to make the necessary invitations for training border guards and drug agents.

¶ 17. Gafarov spoke about the utility of including the agents of
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the Tajik Drug Control Agency and Afghan counterparts into the joint training regime. On the margins of the October 2007 Dushanbe Border Security Conference Drug Control Agency Director Rustam Nazarov told INL Officer that he agreed to joint training drug agent training with Afghan colleagues.

¶ 18. Comment: Because the Khorog Training Center is already operational we expect to be able to move forward quickly, or at least as quickly as the conversation between the Tajik and Afghan governments. Dushanbe will work with Kabul colleagues to facilitate the dialogue. End comment.
JACOBSON